

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (original): An exposure apparatus comprising:

a first table and a second table each including a stage plate on which a work is placed, and a light-transmissible plate to which a mask is previously mounted, the first and second tables being transferred alternately between a load/unload position where the work is loaded/unloaded and aligned with the mask and an exposure position where the aligned set of work and mask is exposed to light;

a first transferring passage and a second transferring passage arranged at two different levels between the load/unload position and the exposure position, wherein the first transferring passage transfers the first table and the second table alternately, while the second transferring passage transfers the second table and the first table alternately;

a hoist mechanism which elevates one of the first and second tables to the first transferring passages, and lowers the other of the second and first tables to the second transferring passage;

a conveyor mechanism which conveys the first and second tables elevated or lowered by the hoist mechanism along the first and second transferring passages, one from the load/unload position to the exposure position, and the other from the exposure position to the load/unload

position;

an alignment mechanism which aligns the work that is placed on one of the tables conveyed to the load/unload position with the mask; and  
a light-exposure mechanism which radiates light to the work placed on the other of the tables conveyed to the exposure position.

Claim 2 (original): An exposure apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said hoist mechanism engages with the first and second tables, respectively, through hoist guide means, and wherein said conveyor mechanism conveys the first and second tables by drive means engageable with the hoist guide means.

Claim 3 (original): An exposure apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said light-transmissible plate includes a plate member which allows transmission of light and to which the mask is set, a front plate-support member provided at a front side of the plate member in relation to a conveying direction of the table from the exposure position to the load/unload position, a positioning protrusion extending from the front plate-support member, and a rear plate-support member opposite to the front plate-support member and fixed to the table so as to be engageable with a rear side of the plate member.

Claim 4 (original): An exposure apparatus according to claim 3, wherein an abutting member is provided in the load/unload position to move toward and away from the positioning protrusion of the light-transmissible plate, and wherein light-transmissible plate guiding means is

provided to push the rear plate-support member of the light-transmissible plate so that the positioning protrusion abuts against the abutting member.

**Claim 5 (original):** An exposure apparatus according to claim 4, wherein each of said first and second tables includes a frame member for remotely and oppositely supporting the stage plate with respect to the light-transmissible plate, and a suction mechanism for sucking a work against the mask.

**Claim 6 (original):** An exposure apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said frame member has guide means for retaining the stage plate at a predetermined position.

**Claim 7 (original):** An exposure apparatus according to claim 5, wherein each of said first and second tables includes a light-transmissible plate slide mechanism which slidably engages with slide means provided on the frame member, so that the stage plate is slidable against the light-transmissible plate.

**Claim 8 (original):** An exposure apparatus according to claim 7, wherein each of said first and second tables includes a stopper plate laterally extending with respect to the second transferring passage extending from the exposure position to the load/unload position, and wherein an abutment stop is provided to move toward and away from a sliding locus of the stopper plate.

Claim 9 (original): An exposure apparatus according to claim 2, wherein each of said first and second tables is provided with conveyor rollers at one of sides extending along the first and second transferring passages, and an engage portion engageable with the hoist guide means at the other side, wherein a guide rail is arranged at both sides of the first and second transferring passages so that the conveyor rollers move along the guide rail, and wherein each guide rail of the first transferring passage includes a cutout through which the conveyor rollers are elevated and lowered, and an assist rail movable toward and away from the cutout.

Claim 10 (original): An exposure apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said drive means is arranged surrounding the load/unload position and the exposure position and includes a drive belt engageable with the hoist guide means of the first and second tables and conveying the first and second tables along the first and second transferring passages, and belt guides for guiding the drive belt.

Claim 11 (original): An exposure apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising a first hoist rod engageable with the first table through the hoist guide means at the load/unload position and the exposure position, a second hoist rod engageable with the second table through the hoist guide means at the load/unload position and the exposure position, a first rotation center rod connected to the first hoist rod through a first link member and being a rotation fulcrum at the time of elevating or lowering the first hoist rod through the first link member, a second rotation center rod connected to the second hoist rod through a second link member and being a rotation fulcrum at the time of lowering or elevating the second hoist rod through the second link

member, and link drive means for rotatably and synchronously moving the first and second link members.

Claim 12 (original): A method of conveying a mask and a work, in which a first table to which a mask and a work are set is conveyed from a fist position to a second position via a fist transferring passage, while a second table to which a mask and a work are set is conveyed from the second position to the first position via a second transferring passage, the method comprising the steps of:

aligning the mask and the work on the first table at the first position, while exposing the work on the second table to light through the mask at the second position; and  
conveying the first table and the second table in an endless manner along a loop, which extends across the first and second positions and includes the first and second transferring passages.

Claim 13 (original): A method of conveying a mask and a work according to claim 12, wherein the first position and the second position are parallel.

Claim 14 (original): A method of conveying a mask and a work according to claim 12, wherein the first transferring passage and the second transferring passage are positioned vertically to each other.

Appl. No. 10/617,816  
In re Morita et al.  
Reply to Office Action of June 19, 2004

Claim 15 (original): A method of conveying a mask and a work according to claim 14, wherein the first transferring passage is arranged on top of the second transferring passage.

Claim 16 (original): A method of conveying a mask and a work according to claim 12, wherein the loop is rectangular.

Claim 17 (new): 17. A method of conveying a mask and a work according to claim 12, wherein the first and second tables each includes a stage plate on which the work is placed and a light-transmissible plate to which the mask is previously mounted, and wherein the method further comprises the steps of placing the work on the stage plate and mounting the mask to the light-transmissible plate prior to the step of aligning the mask and the work on the first table at the first position.

Claim 18 (new): An exposure apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the hoist mechanism elevates one of the first and second tables from the second transferring passage to the first transferring passage, and lowers the other one of the first and second tables from the first transferring passage to the second transferring passage.

Claim 19 (new): An exposure apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the first table and the second table are transferred in an endless manner along a loop.

Appl. No. 10/617,816  
In re Morita et al.  
Reply to Office Action of June 19, 2004

Claim 20 (new): An exposure apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the first table and the second table are transferred in a first direction along the first transferring passage and in a second direction along the second transferring passage, and wherein the first direction is opposite to the second direction.